



G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center

to care for him who shall have borne the battle and his widow, and orphan

FOCUSED ON YOU

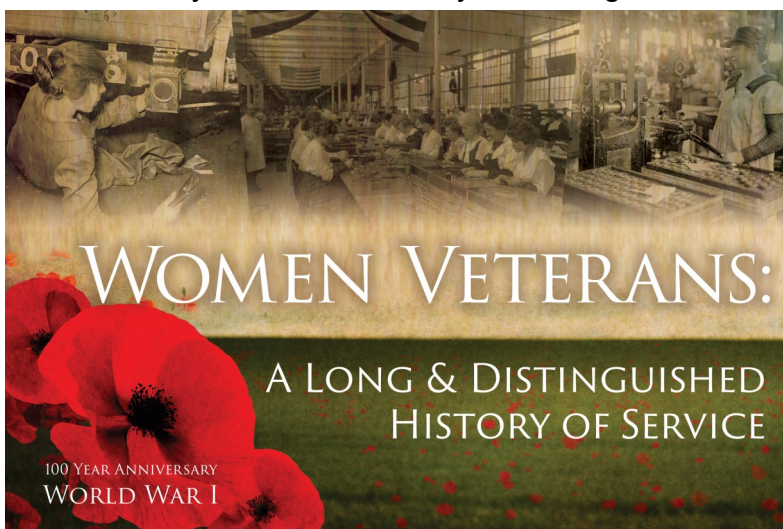
MARCH 2020

Commemorate Women's History Month

VA joins the nation in commemorating Women's History Month this March by celebrating the achievements of women and their contributions to our nation's history.

This year's Women's History Month theme, as established by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, celebrates the 75th Anniversary of World War II by "Honoring the Past, Securing the Future." World War II greatly contributed to women's advancements in various ways. For instance, the war effort brought more women into the workforce, contributed to women first enlisting in the military and showed the United States how women can contribute to our nation.

VA celebrates these pioneers of women's achievements in building a nation during a time of war. In 2020, we celebrate these women's struggles and contributions that led to significant advancements.



While men were enlisted in the military during World War II, women were increasingly taking over positions back home in all sorts of white-collar and blue-collar fields, including construction, steel and lumber. At first, women faced a great deal of discrimination, including lower pay, sexual harassment, dangerous working conditions and long hours.

As women continued to work with great skill in these fields, they started to gain the respect of their male counterparts. The poster featuring Rosie the Riveter stating "We Can Do It" left a legacy on the influence of women during World War II and signaled a bright future for women.

The U.S. military recognized how women were needed on the front lines to succeed in the war.

The following women's units were formed during World War II: Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)/ Women's Army Corps (WAC); Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES); Marine Corps Women's Reserve; Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS); Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP); Army Nurse Corps; and Navy Nurse Corps.

According to the National World War II Museum, nearly 350,000 U.S. women volunteered to serve in these units, at home and abroad. These units also encouraged women from racial minority backgrounds to enlist in the war. When women returned from the war, they could not easily access the same benefits available to men, such as the G.I. Bill. Women would continue to stand up for these rights in the future.

As of Sept. 30, 2019, women represented 60.62 percent of the overall VA workforce. Although this may seem like a large number, it remains 4.18 percent below the National Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF) figure of 64.85 percent, which is the benchmark.

Women Veterans make up nearly 16 percent of permanent and temporary women employees in VA. In VA's permanent leadership pipeline (GS-12 through GS-14), women have lower than expected representation, holding 57.5% of those positions. Women may also have lower than expected representation in executive leadership positions (GS-15 and Senior Executive Service positions), since they hold 41.24 percent of those roles.

On Feb. 11, the Center for Women Veterans, Center for Minority Veterans and Veterans Cauteen Service hosted a screening of the documentary, "The Six Triple Eight: No Mail, Low Morale" at VA Central Office. This film tells the

relatively unknown story of the WAAC's 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, also known as the "Six Triple Eight."

VA encourages organizations and facilities this March to recognize achievements of women by organizing activities targeted at raising awareness, increasing knowledge and addressing any identified barriers to the full employment and inclusion of women at VA.

For more information about Women's History Month, contact your local Equal Employment Opportunity Office, local Federal Women's Program Manager or Sehar Minhas, VA's National Federal Women's Program Manager, at (202) 461-4036 or odi@va.gov. For more information on VA's Federal Women's Program, visit the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) web page at <https://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/women.aspx>.

We remember and honor women who served our nation for Women's History Month. Women are the fastest-growing Veteran population seeking care in VA. Whole Health offers them proactive and personalized health care to #LiveWholeHealth and discover what matters. From stress reduction, nutrition, and health coaching, to traditional clinical care and complementary health approaches—Whole Health provides a pathway to help Veterans live their lives to the fullest and discover what matters. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqNzmQBgehU>



Mississippi VA

INVITES FEMALE VETERANS,
RETIREES, ACTIVE DUTY, RESERVES,
AND NATIONAL GUARD TO ATTEND
DRESS CODE: UNIFORM OF THE DAY

WOMEN VETERANS SYMPOSIUM

*owning
leadership*

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

- Maintaining a Proper Work/Life Balance
- Claiming Your Relevance
- Panel Discussion
- Separations and Finding a Job
- VA Benefits and You (Active Duty)
- VA Benefits and You (Retired and Separated)

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

- US Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith
- Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch
- Col Heather Blackwell, Wing Commander 81st Training Wing, Keesler Air Force Base
- Col Samantha Weeks, Wing Commander 14th Flying Training Wing, Columbus Air Force Base

MARCH 20TH, 2020 • 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM • BILOXI, MS

at the Bay Breeze Event Center at Keesler Air Force Base

REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 8:00 AM • LUNCH INCLUDED

PRE-REGISTRATION & RECEPTION • BAY BREEZE EVENT CENTER • MARCH 19, 2020 • 7:00 – 8:30 PM

SIGN UP THROUGH EVENTBRITE → bit.ly/msva-wvs20

For more information, contact **Caroline Kennard** at **601-576-4853**.

The first Women Veterans Symposium hosted by Mississippi VA will be held at Keesler Air Force Base on March 20, 2020. Sign up through Eventbrite at bit.ly/msva-wvs20. For more information, contact Caroline Kennard at 601-576-4853.

VA Serves up Whole Health for National Nutrition Month

Making healthy choices about [food and drink](https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/circle-of-health/food-drink.asp) (<https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/circle-of-health/food-drink.asp>) is a powerful way to help care for yourself. Each March, National Nutrition Month focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. This year's theme is *Eat Right, Bite by Bite*. Food and drink give our bodies the fuel used to work properly, stay healthy, and fight disease.

Find out how VA can help you eat better and #LiveWholeHealth. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xa6-dyaFddo&feature=youtu.be>



VIETNAM COMMEMORATION

Our nation's Vietnam War Commemoration is a long-overdue opportunity for all Americans to recognize, honor, and thank our Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices during one of America's longest wars.

This commemoration recognizes all men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Nine million Americans, approximately 7.2 million who are living today, served during the Vietnam era.

Nearly everyone in Mississippi was touched by the Vietnam War in one way or another. As they had done in all American wars, Mississippians served in Vietnam with pride and honor, and 637 returned home under a flag-draped coffin, having paid the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation. Twelve Mississippians are still listed as Missing in Action and two Mississippians, Ed W. Freeman and Roy M. Wheat were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their valor in Vietnam.

On November 14, 1965, Captain Freeman, a native of Greene County, Mississippi flew fourteen helicopter rescue missions into intense enemy fire in the La Drang Valley in order to evacuate an estimated thirty seriously wounded soldiers. His heroism is with the First Calvary Division was depicted in the 2002 movie, *We Were Soldiers*.

Lance Corporal Wheat of the First Marine Division, a native of Moselle, Mississippi, was killed in action on August 11, 1967, when he threw himself upon a mine, taking the impact of the

explosion and saving fellow marines from certain injury and possible death.



Mississippi VA INVITES YOU TO ATTEND


**VIETNAM
COMMEMORATION
CEREMONY**
*honoring Mississippi Veterans
who served in Vietnam*

Join us to thank and honor Vietnam Veterans for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the Nation.

MARCH 19TH, 2020 • 11:00 AM • JACKSON, MS
at the South Side of the Capitol

For more information, contact **Caroline Kennard** at **601-576-4853**.

These two men are examples Mississippi's sons and daughters who have always stepped forward when our Nation has called. They, and all Mississippi's Vietnam Veterans, deserve our utmost respect and admiration.

Please join us on March 19, 2020, at 11 a.m. at the State Capitol to thank and honor Vietnam Veterans for their service and sacrifice.

Coronavirus: Be informed and call your provider if symptoms develop

COVID-19 ALERT

If you have a fever, cough or other cold symptoms, be prepared to talk about recent travel and/or contact with others with these symptoms.

1

ASK FOR A MASK



Make sure the mask covers your mouth and nose.

2

KEEP HANDS CLEAN



Use hand sanitizer or soap and water.

3

TELL US ABOUT IT



Report any recent travel and your symptoms.



<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus>

This is current CDC guidance in a very rapidly changing environment. The VHA Emergency Management Coordination Cell will provide changes and/or updates as required.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

02/25/2020

Talk of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) is everywhere. Here's what you should know and do to keep yourself and your loved ones healthy.

Know the symptoms

COVID-19 is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in humans, usually 2–14 days after exposure. Illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The virus is thought to spread mainly from close contact with an affected person. It spreads in the air, like flu, through droplets from sneezes and coughs. The droplets can stay suspended in the air for some time and can land on surfaces that are touched by others.

Understand your risk

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers COVID-19 to be a serious public health threat, but individual risk is dependent on exposure. For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk of COVID-19 is low.

Keep an eye on coronavirus, but remember the flu

Symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath also happen to be symptoms of the common cold and flu. This year, at least 29 million flu cases have been reported with 280,000 hospitalizations and 16,000 deaths from flu. Flu activity most commonly peaks between December and February and can last until May.

What's important to remember is that anyone can get the flu. But you are more likely to become infected if you:

- Have a weakened immune system
- Have frequent, close contact with young children
- Work in a health care setting where you may be exposed to flu germs
- Live or work with someone who has the flu
- Haven't received an annual flu shot

Take precautions to guard against infection

- Get a flu shot
- Keep your hands clean by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid people who are sick
- Stay home and away from others when sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with tissues or your arm/sleeve. Dispose of tissues in the trash.
- Keep surfaces clean using disinfecting wipes

Coronavirus: Be informed and call your provider if symptoms develop (Continued)

Check the [CDC advisories](#) prior to planning travel

Stay home and phone

If you have symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath, please call your local VA medical center and select the option to speak to a nurse before visiting the facility. Tell them about your symptoms and any recent travel. In addition to calling first, consider using [VA's telehealth and virtual care options](#). VA's telehealth providers can evaluate your symptoms and provide a diagnosis and comprehensive care, so you do not have to leave your home or office. Get VA's latest updates on COVID-19: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/index.asp>

Upcoming Events

- ◇ **March 8**—Time Change (Spring Forward)
- ◇ **March 8**—Quarterly Memorial Service in Chapel
- ◇ **March 19** at 11 a.m.—Vietnam Commemoration Ceremony at the State Capitol
- ◇ **March 20** at 8:30 a.m. — Women Veterans Symposium in Biloxi
- ◇ **March 23** at 10 a.m.—Women's History Program in Montgomery Hall, VA Medical Center
- ◇ **March 25**—LGBT Health Awareness Week Resource and Education Fair in the Atrium, VA Medical Center

For an updated list of events visit <https://www.jackson.va.gov/calendar.asp>

**Save
the
Date!**

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Choose VA